

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 NIC-01 SY-10 OPR-02 CU-04 OMB-01

NEA-10 EA-11 A-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /187 W

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R 261709Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8647

INFO PAN CANAL

USSOUTHCOM

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 5223

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PQ, PN

SUBJ: DEMONSTRATION AT NATIONAL UNIVERSITY AGAINST US

REF: PANAMA 4976

1. SUMMARY: DURING CELEBRATION OF BOOK WEEK AT NATIONAL UNIVERSITY U S FLAG WAS REMOVED FROM USIS EXHIBIT AND BURNED.

2. CHINESE AMBASSADOR, ACTING AS DEAN OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS, CALLED ON ME SEPTEMBER 25 TO INFORM ME OF INCIDENT AT NATIONAL UNIVERSITY AT WHICH DEMONSTRATORS REMOVED US FLAG FROM USIS BOOK EXHIBIT AND BURNED IT OUTSIDE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY. CHINESE AMBASSADOR WAS PRESENT AT INVITATION UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES TO REPRESENT DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND TO PARTICIPATE IN INAUGURATION OF BOOK WEEK EXHIBIT. ABOUT TEN OTHER AMBASSADORS OR CHARGES WERE ALSO PRESENT. I DID NOT ATTEND HAVING ACCEPTED INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN CULTURAL EVENT SPONSORED BY VENEZUELAN EMBASSY.

3. ACCORDING TO CHINESE AMBASSADOR INAUGURATION BEGAN
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ABOUT 30 MINUTES LATE AT 5:30 PM SEPTEMBER 24.

DEMONSTRATORS ENTERED ROOM WHERE EXHIBITS LOCATED

SHOUTING ANTI-US SLOGANS, DEMANDS FOR RETURN OF CANAL, AND IN DEFENSE OF ALLENDE REGIME. SLOGANS INCLUDED DENUNCIATION OF ISRAEL AND REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND ALSO OF RECTOR.

4. DEMONSTRATORS SAID TO NUMBER 50 TO 75 SEIZED U S FLAG AT USIS EXHIBIT. SINGLE UNIVERSITY POLICEMAN MADE EFFORT RESTRAIN THEM. FLAG WAS TAKEN OUTSIDE ACCORDING TO OTHER WITNESSES, DRENCHED WITH GASOLINE AND BURNED. DEMONSTRATORS RETURNED AND ALSO DISRUPTED RECTOR'S SPEECH, BUT WHEN HE BEGAN TO LAUD ALLENDE DEMONSTRATORS THEY APPLAUDED.

5. AMBASSADORS AND CHARGES DEPARTED BEFORE CEREMONIES CONCLUDED. ACCORDING TO CHINESE AMBASSADOR THEY CONSIDER FACT UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES PERMITTED DEMONSTRATION TO OCCUR WAS INSULT TO CORPS. RECTOR MADE NO CRITICISM OF DEMONSTRATORS. (HE HAS MADE NO EFFORT CALL ME SINCE DEMONSTRATION AND APOLOGIZE.)

6. CHINESE AMBASSADOR SAID OTHER AMBASSADORS CONSIDERED COLLECTIVE PROTEST TO FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS IN ORDER. I TOLD HIM I AGREED BUT THAT I WOULD BE PRESENT PROTEST FOR BURNING OF U S FLAG WITHOUT ANY EFFORT ON PART UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES TO PREVENT IT.

7. UNIVERSITY RECTOR HAD CALLED ME ABOUT 4:30 PM ON SEPTEMBER 24 TO INFORM ME THAT HE WAS HAVING TROUBLE WITH STUDENTS WHO WANTED TO PROTEST AGAINST U S OVER COUP IN CHILE AND TO SUGGEST THAT I NOT ATTEND. I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD ANOTHER COMMITMENT AND HAD NOT PLANNED TO BE PRESENT.

8. OTHER ACCOUNTS OF "DEMONSTRATION" ARE SUBSTANTIALLY SAME AS THAT OF CHINESE AMBASSADOR. CHINESE AMBASSADOR IS OF VIEW THAT DEMONSTRATION WAS ARRANGED WITH ACQUIESCENCE OF UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES. I AM INCLINED TO AGREE. I ATTACH NO IMPORTANCE TO DENUNCIATION OF RECTOR BY DEMONSTRATORS BECAUSE IT IS COMMON PRACTICE HERE TO PERMIT
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STUDENTS MAKE FEW NOISES AGAINST GOVERNMENT SO THAT STUDENT GROUPS ORGANIZED BY GOP WILL APPEAR MORE "AUTHENTIC." IT IS INTERESTING HOWEVER THAT GOP IS PERMITTING DENUNCIATION OF ISRAEL AS PART OF ITS CAMPAIGN TO GAIN ARAB SUPPORT. GOP HAS NOT PERMITTED ANY NEWS COVERAGE OF INCIDENT.
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